

REMARKS

Claims 12-19, 33-37, and 41-47 continue to appear in this application for the Examiner's review and consideration. Claims 12-19 are directed to the embodiment of the invention depicted in Figures 15-18, claims 33-35 and 46-47 are directed to the embodiment of the invention depicted in Figures 1-6 and 8, and claims 36-37 and 41-45 are directed to the embodiment of the invention depicted in Figure 7.

In response to the restriction requirement, Applicants elect, with traverse, the embodiment of Figure 15-18, claims 12-19, for examination at this time.

During the International processing of the PCT application of which this application is the US national phase, the IPEA of the PCT branch of the US Patent and Trademark Office found that claims 12-19, 33-34 and 36-37 were in condition of meeting the criteria of PCT Articles 33(2)-(4). Thus, those claims were found to be novel and inventive over the cited art and also to not have any informalities. Accordingly, to facilitate the allowance of this application, Applicants originally submitted claims 12, 33 and 36 in independent form while correcting grammar but not substance. The remaining claims depend from one of these claims, so that all claims were believed to remain in condition for meeting those criteria, in effect meaning that the claims are allowable. Applicants submit that there is no reason to now require restriction between claims that have already been examined and found in effect to be patentable. Of course, the Examiner is invited to conduct further searches to further scrutinize the patentability of these claims but the previously determined unity of invention should not be altered at this.

Furthermore, based on the cited art of which Applicants are aware, claims 12-19 of the elected embodiment are allowable. The Examiner is reminded that in the situation where no material prior art is uncovered for the elected species, the search should be expanded to the species disclosed in the other figures up to a "reasonable" number of up to 9. In this application, as noted above, the claims are directed only to three species.

In view of the above, it is believed that the claims are in condition for allowance, early notice of which would be appreciated. Should the Examiner not agree that all claims are

patentable, then a personal or telephonic interview is respectfully requested to discuss any remaining issues in order to expedite the eventual allowance of this application.

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Respectfully submitted,

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